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**SYSTEM FOR DETECTING THE PRESENCE OF HARMFUL MATERIALS IN AN
INCOMING MAIL STREAM**

Abstract of the Invention

Sub a17 An embodiment of the system of the present invention generally comprises a mailpiece sorting apparatus which includes a feeder, an OCR scanner, a mailpiece deliverer, a diverter and output module, compartments or bins for receiving sorted mailpieces, optical character recognition system for reading addressee information, an addressee database, and microprocessor based control system. In an embodiment of the present invention, harmful materials are detected in mailpieces and such mailpieces are diverted from the mail stream. In alternate embodiments of the present invention: the system is contained in a detection area and clean room; and / or the system uses x-ray technology to determine the content of the mailpieces. The system provides for detection of harmful materials in mailpieces so as to help deter delays in incoming mail delivery caused by the presence of life harming material and sanitize the mail so as to protect the intended recipients from harm.